In the Claims:

I claim:

1. (original) A bale banding machine that bands bundles of material using a thermal and moisture activated adhesive baleband, said bale banding machine comprising:

means for guiding the baleband around a bale;

means for tightening the baleband around the bale such that portions of the baleband are overlapped; and

means for sealing the overlapped portion of the baleband, wherein said means for sealing includes a steam applicator for applying steam to the overlapped portions of the baleband.

2. (original) The bale banding machine of claim 1, further comprising means for pressing together the overlapped portions of the baleband to which the steam is applied.

3. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 1, wherein said steam applicator comprises a steam applicator nozzle for discharging a pressurized steam jet between the overlapped portions of the baleband.

4. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 3, wherein said sealing means includes an actuator for providing timed control of steam discharge from the steam applicator nozzle.

5. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 4, wherein said actuator includes circuit means for actuating steam discharge from said steam applicator nozzle over specified time intervals.

6. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 5, wherein said actuator includes a control circuit for coordinating the steam discharge intervals with the tightening of the baleband around the bale.

7. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 1, wherein said means for guiding the baleband around a bale and said means for tightening the baleband around the bale includes a baleband feed motor.

8. (original) A method for banding bundles of material using a thermal and moisture activated adhesive baleband, said method comprising:

guiding the baleband around a bale;

tightening the baleband around the bale such that portions of the baleband are overlapped; and

sealing the overlapped portions of the baleband, wherein said sealing includes applying steam to the overlapped portions of the baleband.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, further comprising pressing together the overlapped portions of the baleband to which the steam is applied.

10. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein said applying steam to the overlapped portions of the baleband comprises discharging a pressurized steam jet between the overlapped portions of the baleband.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein said discharging a directed steam jet toward the overlapped portions of the baleband includes providing timed control of steam discharge from the steam applicator nozzle.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein said providing timed control of steam discharge from the steam applicator nozzle includes actuating steam discharge from said steam applicator nozzle over specified time intervals.

13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein said providing timed control of steam discharge from the steam applicator nozzle includes coordinating the steam discharge intervals with the tightening of the baleband around the bale.

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) ~~The balebanding machine of claim 14,~~ A bale banding machine that bands bundles of material using a thermal and moisture activated adhesive baleband, said bale banding machine comprising:

means for guiding the baleband around a bale;

means for tightening the baleband around the bale such that portions of the baleband are overlapped;

means for sealing the overlapped portion of the baleband, wherein said means for sealing includes an applicator for applying water to the overlapped portions of the baleband, said water possessing sufficient thermal energy to effect adhesion of said overlapped portions; and

means for pressing together the overlapped portions of the baleband to which the water is applied;

wherein said water applicator comprises a water applicator nozzle for discharging a pressurized water jet between the overlapped portions of the baleband.

17. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 16, wherein said sealing means includes an actuator for providing timed control of water discharge from the water applicator nozzle.

18. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 17, wherein said actuator includes circuit means for actuating water discharge from said water applicator nozzle over specified time intervals.

19. (original) The balebanding machine of claim 18, wherein said actuator includes a control circuit for coordinating the water discharge intervals with the tightening of the baleband around the bale.

20. (currently amended) The balebanding machine of claim 16 [[14]], wherein said means for guiding the baleband around a bale and said means for tightening the baleband around the bale includes a baleband feed motor.

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)

23. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 21,~~ A method for banding bundles of material using a thermal and moisture activated adhesive baleband, said method comprising:

guiding the baleband around a bale;

tightening the baleband around the bale such that portions of the baleband are overlapped; and

sealing the overlapped portions of the baleband, wherein said sealing includes applying water to and pressing together the overlapped portions of the baleband, said water possessing sufficient thermal energy to effect adhesion of said overlapped portions; and

wherein said applying water to the overlapped portions of the baleband comprises discharging a pressurized water jet between the overlapped portions of the baleband.

24. (original) The method of claim 23, wherein said discharging a directed water jet toward the overlapped portions of the baleband includes providing timed control of water discharge from the water applicator nozzle.

25. (original) The method of claim 24, wherein said providing timed control of water discharge from the water applicator nozzle includes actuating water discharge from said water applicator nozzle over specified time intervals.

26. (original) The method of claim 25, wherein said providing timed control of water discharge from the water applicator nozzle includes coordinating the water discharge intervals with the tightening of the baleband around the bale.